

Message Text

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16

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 190625Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3055

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

USUN NY 794

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 9982

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS SECDEF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, CB

SUBJECT: SIHANOUK ON MILITARY STALEMATE IN CAMBODIA

REF: FBIS LONDON L-181002 AND L-181004 SEP 73

1. GRANTING THAT THIS MERCURIAL POLITICAN PLAYS ALL OVER THE LOT, SIHANOUK'S PUBLIC RECOGNITION THAT HE MAY BE FACING AN INDEFINITE MILITARY STALEMATE IN CAMBODIA (REFTELS) IS AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD. THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE FOR SIHANOUK TO REALIZE THAT HE HAS A MAJOR PERSONAL INTEREST IN THAT STALEMATE, FOR WITHOUT IT HE HAS NO POLITICAL FUTURE; EITHER THE WAR GOES ON, AND HE IS ONLY AN APPENDAGE OF THE INSURGENCY; OR THE KC WIN, AND SIHANOUK CAN RETURN TO PHNOM PENH ONLY ON THEIR HARSH TERMS, IF AT ALL.

2. MEANWHILE SIHANOUK'S STATEMENT MAKES EXCELLENT PROPAGANDA IN CAMBODIA. INDEED, IT IS TOO GOOD, AND WE
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ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EVER-PRESENT KHMER WILLINGNESS TO LET DOWN. THUS WE ARE MAKING THESE POINTS TO KHMER CONTACTS:

A) SIHANOUK IS RIGHT: THE KC WON'T TAKE PHNOM PENH

OR ANY MAJOR PROVINCIAL CAPITAL IF THE GKR GETS THE
MANPOWER IT NEEDS AND THE POLITICAL SOLIDARITY IT MUST
HAVE FOR THE DRY SEASON CAMPAIGN. SIHANOUK'S INTERVIEW
SHOWS THAT THE GOOD FANK PERFORMANCE SINCE 15 AUGUST IS
BEGINNING TO SINK IN.

B) BUT THE GKR SHOULD REMEMBER THAT SIHANOUK DOESN'T
CALL THE SHOTS. IN AUGUST HE SAID THERE WOULD BE NO
MAJOR PUSH BEFORE THE DRY SEASON. IN FACT THE KC LAUNCHED
MAJOR EFFORTS AGAINST PHNOM PENH AND KOMPONG CHAM.

C) AND THE UNDERLYING TRUTH IS THAT ONLY IF THE GKR
REACHES A POSITION OF STRENGTH CAN IT EXPECT GOOD RESULTS
IN EVENTUAL NEGOTIATIONS.
ENDERS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

SECRET

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